

## **Possible Tough Flu Season Ahead**

- As of November 29, 2014, flu activity is increasing in the United States.
- Influenza A (H3N2) has been the most common flu virus so far.
- In past seasons when H3N2 has been common, there were more hospitalizations and deaths from the flu.
- This year's flu vaccine still works against several flu viruses. However, it may not work as well against H3N2, because some H3N2 viruses tested this year have changed or "drifted" from the original virus.
- Some people who are at highest risk of getting the flu and complications from the flu are seniors, very young children, pregnant women, travelers, and people with disabilities or chronic illnesses. (See [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) for more details on who is at high risk.)

## **What to Do**

- Your and your family (6 months and up) should **get the flu shot** if you have not already. It will still protect you against other flu viruses, and may keep you from getting as sick even if you get H3N2.
- **Practice flu prevention:** wash hands often; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; cover coughs and sneezes; disinfect commonly touched surfaces like doorknobs and phones; stay home from work and school when you are sick; and stay away from others who are sick.
- **Anyone at high-risk who gets sick with flu-like illness should go to the doctor as soon as possible to see if antivirals (Tamiflu and Relenza) could help.** Antivirals work better when started early. Your doctor should not wait for flu test results before starting antivirals if they are recommended.

## **For More Information**

Seasonal Flu Information: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

Maryland Flu Information: <http://phpa.dhmdh.maryland.gov/influenza/fluwatch/SitePages/Home.aspx>